

STATE OF NEW YORK
LEGISLATURE OF ERIE COUNTY
BUFFALO, NY, FEBRUARY 1, 2022

Honoring and Celebrating African American History Month

WHEREAS, during National African American History Month, we celebrate the vast contributions of Black African Americans to our Nation's history and identity throughout the month of February; and

WHEREAS, African American History Month grew out of the establishment of Negro History Week by Carter G. Woodson and the Association for the Study of African American Life and History in 1926; and

WHEREAS, former President Gerald Ford officially recognized Black History Month in 1976, calling upon the public to "seize the opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of Black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history"; and

WHEREAS, within predominantly Black and Brown communities, Black History Month was met with enthusiastic response; and

WHEREAS, the observance of Black History Month calls our attention to the continued need to battle racism and build a society that lives up to its democratic ideals; and

WHEREAS, Erie County has rich history of African American achievements; and

WHEREAS, Buffalo legends Mary Talbert and Reverend J. Edward Nash played a critical role in the founding of the Buffalo chapter of the NAACP; and

WHEREAS, in the early 1900s, African Americans were not allowed to join the only musician's union in Buffalo and in 1917, eight local black musicians decided to create their own union, Local 533; and

WHEREAS, a year later, the union formed a social club called the Colored Musicians Club, which is still located on the corner of Broadway and Michigan Avenue and is one of the only remaining African American musicians club in the country; and

WHEREAS, the Michigan Street African American Heritage Corridor originated in 2007 by community leaders who were passionate about Michigan Avenue in Buffalo and the corridor's history; and

WHEREAS, breaking bread is another way to experience Buffalo's African American culture; it can be the most delicious journey as you partake in mouthwatering soul food dishes; and

WHEREAS, the Freedom Wall is a mural at the intersection of Michigan Avenue and East Ferry that features 28 portraits of prominent African American Civil Rights leaders from Buffalo such as Bill “William” Gaiter, Former Assemblyman Arthur O’ Eve Sr., Eva Doyle, Dr. Lydia T. Wright and leaders that are known globally such as Marcus Garvey, W.E.B DuBois and many more historical figures; and

WHEREAS, the mural was created in 2017 by local artists John Baker, Julia Bottoms-Douglas, Chuck Tingley and Edreys Wajed; and

WHEREAS, the Robeson Theatre, founded in 1968 is the oldest African American Theatre in Western New York; and

WHEREAS, Buffalo’s Juneteenth Festival is the third-largest celebration of the holiday in the world; and

WHEREAS, WUFO Mix 1080 AM, Western New York’s first radio station programming to the African-American community first hit the airwaves in 1961; and

WHEREAS, although Black History Month is traditionally celebrated in February, it highlights issues, challenges, and opportunities that should be celebrated and acknowledged all year-round; and

WHEREAS, the roots of African American heritage run deep in Western New York and we will forever remember the rich history and those individually who paved the way for so many Black and Brown individuals.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, that this Honorable Body hereby proclaims the Month of February 2022 as African American History Month and encourage all residents to honor Black American history and culture.

Hon. Howard J. Johnson Jr.
Erie County Legislator, 1st District

Hon. April N.M Baskin
Erie County Legislator, 2nd District